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# New Educational Review

## **Book Review:**

***Edukacja dorosłych* by Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton,  
Richard A. Swanson, trans. by M. Habura, R. Ligus, A. Nizińska,  
Warszawa: PWN, 2009, pp. 376**

Educating Adults seems to be one of the most significant works on educating adult people.

In the society whose imperative is long-life learning, a manual that explains the specifics of teaching and educating adults is necessary. The reviewed book aspires to be a comprehensive work dealing with the question of adult education.

The book consists of three parts. The first one, entitled “The Roots of Andragogy” (chapters 2&6) introduces the reader into pedagogical and andragogical discourse on the essence and extraordinariness of adult education. The particular chapters contain interesting interpretations of the research findings referring to the process of adults’ learning, a deepened analysis of the didactic conduct in terms of the plan preparation, realisation and evaluation of the teaching-learning process, and rumination on adults’ learning models functioning in the theory and practice of adult education. Considerable emphasis should be put on the presented andragogical model of learning which is set against the traditional model of adult education. According to the authors the advantage of the andragogical model is based on the process and conduct ability (optimal usage of learning procedures and the learner’s resources). In this model the directing/supervising function of the teacher is rejected for the benefit of common aims and strategies setting as well as implementing them.

The second part, “Progress in Adult Learning” (chapters 7–11), focuses on a detailed analysis of the andragogical model of learning practically how to educate adults; an attempt has been made to look at it and assess critically from the perspective of the individual’s professional development; numerous interesting assumptions which require empirical validating and verifying have been put

forward. A prognosis of the development of andragogy, both in theory and practice, has been brought forward, too.

The third part, "Adult Education in Practice" (chapters 12–19), is devoted to a thorough analysis, adopted at work, andragogical concept of adult education and exemplification of its basic assumptions and principles. For instance, the chapter entitled Entirety-Part-Entirety is a sort of set of instructions for teachers working with adults. Particular steps of the didactic conduct, schemes of particular training and educating programmes have been shown in a synthesised way. Considerable emphasis has been put on the need to make a contract between the learner and the teacher, which constitutes a certain common ground to exchange the expectations resulting from the external requirements/standards set by the organisation as well as the ones resulting from the internal needs and interests of the learning person.

Tools allowing for the self-assessment of learning competence and individual model of learning have been analysed widely and conscientiously (i.e.: *A Guide to Diagnosing and Planning the Key Competence Development* and *An Adult Learning Style Questionnaire*). Selected adult learning models have been presented in the context of teaching methods: andragogical and pedagogical, stressing the merits/advantages of both. A great part of the chapter has been devoted to one of the most frequently used forms of educating adults: worker training. The factors determining their efficiency have been analysed in detail, indicating at the same time their drawbacks and limitations.

Taking into account the extensive perspective from which the specifics of educating adults have been referred to, as well as the interesting, logically cohesive lecture, absorbing interpretations of the quoted research findings, and more importantly, propositions of the adult education quality improvement, I think this book is worth recommending not only to pedagogy students, but also to academic workers and specialists preparing training and other forms of adult education.